

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC SPEAKING SESSION
MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2016
6:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Council President McCarthy called the Public Speaking Session to order at 6:50 p.m.

ROLL CALL

City Clerk Martinez called the roll.

The following members were present:

130th District: Kathryn Bukovsky, Scott Burns
131st District: Jack O. Banta, Denese Taylor-Moye
132nd District: M. Evette Brantley, John Olson
133rd District: Thomas McCarthy, Jeanette Herron
134th District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Salter
136th District: Jose Casco, Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Milta Feliciano
138th District: Nessah Smith
139th District: Eneida Martinez

A quorum was present.

Council President McCarthy announced that Council Member Paoletto was not present due to a family emergency and that Council Member Holloway was at a funeral.

He then reviewed the procedure for the public speakers and reminded everyone they were allotted five minutes each.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED PERSON HAS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO ADDRESS THE CITY COUNCIL ON MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2016, AT 6:30 P.M., IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL, 45 LYON TERRACE, BRIDGEPORT, CT.

NAME

SUBJECT

Ethan Book
144 Coleman Street
Bridgeport, CT 06604

City government efficiency and conflicts of interest.

Mr. Ethan Book came forward and made the following statement:

In my comment to your of the previous City Council meeting, I referred to recent media reporting of a \$20 million city budget deficit and of a public response of 131st District Councilwoman Denese Taylor-Moye commenting, "I'm in a state of shock. Why didn't anyone see this? This is mind-blowing." I also mentioned several factors for which such a situation should not have been a surprise, factors including that positions of an internal city auditor and a legislative aide had been curiously terminated, also of practices of questionable use of council member stipends and misuse of budgeted funds intended for legislative services. During the personal privilege portion of that meeting, there were statements of several council members which appeared to pertain to my comments. With this understanding, I give additional comments.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that there appears to be some people practicing defamation. Defamation is the intentional communication of a false statement which is injurious to one's reputation. However, Ms. Taylor-Moye failed to specifically challenge any factual statements which I made. All she said was that she has neighborhood events. That apparently is in response to a letter which I presented to her on April 4, 2014 and to information which I had received from the Finance Department which reflected that during 2013, Ms. Taylor-Moye charged to her city debit card 60 purchases at locations including Stop & Shop, PriceRight and BJ's, all totaling \$3,036 (that is an average of over \$58 weekly) and that there were payments totaling \$1,778 to Cablevision. I asked for an explanation of these expenses. I received nothing until more than a year and a half later at the recent council meeting in which she said that she has neighborhood events. In my view, such an explanation is inadequate. Also, at that meeting of April 2014, I pointed out that she had made city-paid trips to Miami, Boston and Washington, DC. I asked to her explain the benefit to the 131st District of those trips. I've yet received no explanation. There was no defamation by me.

Ms. Taylor-Moye also made a general comment about disgruntled political competitors. If that was intended to refer to me it also wouldn't fit as she should remember that I accepted an invitation to an election evening party hosted by Councilman Jack Banta and his wife. Also, much of the information to which I have referred was obtained after the 2013 election. Further, a contested political campaign is often the forum for developing public issues.

Ms. Taylor-Moye additionally said that if people hear something, they should just leave it. It sounds like she's saying that she is above accountability. Certainly, a suitable way of dealing with such matters is not for her to say to others in the District that "Ethan Book should mind his own business." Matter which I have raised here are my business as well as public business.

Council Member Jack Banta responded to my comment by saying his books are open. If his books are open, then one would think that he would have timely responded to my separate letter sent to him on April 4, 2014.

With respect to my statement about Walter Boyle, one who apparently was hired in replacement of legislative aide Thomas White, that Mr. Boyle essentially does nothing, a councilman said that my statement was wrong. Let's look at this. Perhaps Mr. Boyle answers some questions. Perhaps he attempts to fix some parking tickets. Mr. Boyle, known to be a retired police officer having worked his law enforcement career in Massachusetts, is understood to have been hired by Council President Thomas McCarthy without public solicitation, that he takes orders from President McCarthy, that he works as a de facto legislative aide and is paid by the Office of the City Clerk.

For these and other points of information which I could add, the fact of the recently reported City budget deficit of \$20 million should not have been a surprise to anyone.

As a matter of additional focus for the City, I suggest that there be a review of the relationship between Associate City Attorney Russell Liskov and Attorney Juda Epstein.

Thank you for your attention. May God bless us all!

Cecil C. Young
99 Carroll Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06607

Investigation concerning unjust
termination.

Mr. Cecil Young came forward and said that he had been having problems for the last seven years. He said that he saluted the flag for many years and had worked for the City for 27 and a half years without an issue. He asked the Council what it would take to ask the Mayor what he should do to correct the situation. Mr. Young said that he was doing the right thing and that everyone else should do the right thing. He then reiterated the details of his dismissal from the City. The City staff was told that if they saw something, they should say something. He said that he had seen something and said something because the situation needed to be corrected. There was a situation that needed to be corrected. Now the Council should help him correct the injustice and the Civil rights violation. He said that the City should recompense him for the pain and suffering that he endured.

John Marshall Lee
30 Beacon Street
Bridgeport, CT 06605

“Where is the Sheriff?”

Have you had a moment in time recently where you saw something that you knew was not right? That probably broke a law or regulation? That put lives of people or their property at risk? And yet there was no one available to respond to your call for help? If you have seen either of the recent movies of this holiday season, SPOTLIGHT and THE BIG SHORT, you may get what I am talking about. The frustration of seeing something that should be working better than the manner that has become the status quo and yet the inability to find anyone with clout to deal with the issue is a real one.

My frustration with fiscal issues in the City of Bridgeport for many years has caused me to learn, study and to speak out. Very slowly I have come to realize that when more than one person or department is able to look at an issue that requires change or resolution

there is an opportunity. The change of administration that you are part of is just such a moment. Your vote to question in a specific way the lack of action by the former City Council in their final meeting is an opportunity to get it right. Many of you who were part of that former body reported that you had been told that the funds for increased salaries for Department heads in a union and for others as well were already appropriated and were surprised to find that they had not been.

On one level I want to ask you why you thought the increases were budgeted last spring as part of the appropriations side of the budget you voted upon? Did you compare 2014-15 and the current one? If it was not in the spring budget, when did a budget revision occur with Council approval? For that matter when was the last time that your body was asked to vote upon budget transfers as directed by the Charter? For those Council members who are not on Budget and Appropriations, do you bother to look at monthly financial reports, noting the absence of variance figures in so many of those same reports for many years? Why do you not ask for a change in those same reports as suggested on more than one occasion? And to cause you to understand what matters are really about, why does your Council not resolve very promptly to require a dollar amount or dollar range by any and all matters that are referred to your committees for a decision? Such info could at a minimum alert one and all of the fiscal importance of such an issue, couldn't it? Such a request is within your power to promptly address.

Thus far I have commented on money issues. Changing gears let me importantly address the loss of human life. All lives matter and public safety officers are charged with protecting all...young or older, native born or immigrant, working, unemployed or retired, of all races, religions and political beliefs. With that in mind and our own City history as a background let me offer a statistic from GHETTOSIDE a 2015 non-fiction book about death of one black man in Los Angeles. The author, Jill Leovy, is a news reporter and indicates that black males in the US comprise only 6 % of the population but count for almost 40% of murder victims each year in the US. What allows that to happen? How can you change this to decrease the loss of young lives in Bridgeport? If there is a worse statistic upon which to base City Council focus in 2016, please let me know, but until you do, I ask you through each Committee and in all of your interaction, please consider this attack on members of our community to be the most pressing issue, requiring your attention and solution.

I have spoken about TIPS, Trustworthy Information for Public Safety on several occasions in the past 44 months. Just recently Channel 12 began to provide notice. We need more publicity for this "public safety" effort that encourages all community members to notice and anonymously report violence, law breaking, guns and drugs among other neighborhood activities so that public safety officers can better address neighborhood problems as they truly are. If community members are too fearful to "snitch" or, rather, safely share info that may save innocent lives, then such a community needs to challenge itself to become part of a safe way to participate in securing public safety for their community. Will it happen? Time will tell.

Anna Montalvo, AFSCME Local 1552 President
Tom Fascio, AFSCME Council 4 Representative

City of Bridgeport
City Council
Regular Meeting
January 4, 2016

Ms. Montalvo said that she was very concerned about the AFSCME contract negotiations. She said that it was incumbent upon the City administration to bring the contracts to the Council. The BOE has a number of consultants that are paid \$800.00 a day.

Mr. Tom Fascio said that he would like the Council to pass the contract when it comes up for a vote. This contract has been in the works since 2014. He said that there were furlough days in the contract as give backs. He said that it was not the union's responsibility to make sure the contract goes to the council.

Ms. Montalvo pointed out that there were five furlough days in the last contract for the union members but none of the administrators elected to take furlough days. The union members live, work and pay taxes in the City.

Gary DeBriza
Bridgeport CT.

Mr. Gary DeBriza came forward and said that he was a teacher that lives in Bridgeport. He said that the teachers did not get furloughs but did get a raise. Without the union members, the teachers probably could not do their jobs. Teachers are not paid 30% of their insurance. Now, after these employees have worked for three years without a contract, they simply want their pay. He said that he felt it was hard to be believe that the superintendent did not know about the contract. The City needs to appreciate these employees who work so hard and asked if the Council Members would work for three years without a contract and deserve consideration.

Council President McCarthy left the meeting at 7:20 p.m. Council President Pro Tempore Taylor-Moye took over as Chair.

Crystal Mack
Bridgeport, CT

Ms. Mack came forward to speak about the school system. She said that she was passionate about the education. She said she had been discriminated against. She said that the school administration should be ashamed of their actions. She spoke about the wages that were being paid in the 1980's. The staff does not speak to the students. It's time to get rid of all the assistant superintendents, particularly those who can't relate to people.

ADJOURNMENT

Council President Pro Tempore Taylor-Moye then adjourned the Public Speaking Portion of the Council Meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services

City of Bridgeport
City Council
Regular Meeting
January 4, 2016

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2016

7:00 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace
Bridgeport, Connecticut

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ganim called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

PRAYER

Mayor Ganim then requested Council Member Olson to lead those present in prayer.

Council Member Martinez requested a moment of personal privilege and said that those present should keep the family of three year old Sincere Pettway, who died following a fire at her family's apartment in their prayers.

Mayor Ganim said that it would be important to also keep those who had suffered tragedies in Bridgeport during the holidays in mind, including Luis Colon, the fourteen year old shooting victim.

Council President McCarthy also requested that those present remember the recent passing of one of the City employees. He added that former Council Member and City employee Keith Rodgers had just lost his grandfather, Vinny Rodgers.

Mayor Ganim thanked all those who helped with the Charles Street fire and donated to the victims.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that her grandson was a first cousin of Sincere Pettway and complimented Council Member Martinez on her excellent work helping the Pettway family after the tragic loss of three year old Sincere.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Ganim then requested Council Member Lyons to lead those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

City Clerk Martinez called the roll.

The following members were present:

130th District: Kathryn Bukovsky, Scott Burns
131st District: Jack O. Banta, Denese Taylor-Moye
132nd District: M. Evette Brantley, John Olson
133rd District: Thomas McCarthy, Jeanette Herron
134th District: Michelle Lyons, AmyMarie Vizzo-Paniccia
135th District: Mary McBride-Lee, Richard Salter
136th District: Jose Casco, Alfredo Castillo
137th District: Aidee Nieves, Milta Feliciano
138th District: Nessah Smith
139th District: Eneida Martinez

A quorum was present.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL:

Approval of City Council Minutes: November 2, 2015 and December 7, 2015

Council President McCarthy explained that the November 2, 2015 minutes had been tabled pending a clarification. He added that only the members of the Council that had been present for the meeting could vote on approval.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED THE MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 2, 2015.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER FELICIANO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH ELEVEN (11) IN FAVOR (BANTA, TAYLOR-MOYE, MCCARTHY, LYONS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, SALTER, CASCO, CASTILLO, FELICIANO, AND MARTINEZ) AND SEVEN (7) ABSTENTIONS (BUKOVSKY, BURNS, BRANTLEY, OLSON, HERRON, NIEVES, AND SMITH).**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 2015.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER TAYLOR-MOYE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF DECEMBER 7, 2015 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

09-15 (A) Public Hearing re: Disposition of City-Owned Property located at 281-283 Dover Street by Auction, Sale to Abutter or by Sale to Community Based Housing Development Corporations.

Mayor Ganim opened the public hearing on the disposition of the city owned property at 281-283 Dover Street at 7:43 p.m. He asked if anyone present wished to speak on the matter.

Mr. John Marshall Lee came forward and asked why this parcel was being sold. Mr. Max Perez, from the Office of Economic Development, came forward.

Mr. Perez came forward and said that this was a parcel with a row house. There was an appraisal of \$25,000 on September 18, 2015. They were selling to the abutter for \$26,000.

Mr. Lee asked if the tax assessor had given an assessment. Mr. Perez said that he did not know.

Council Member Olson asked who was buying it. Mr. Perez replied that it was the abutter for the back taxes.

Council Member Lyons said that the Council Members had asked that in the future, Economic Development provide the Committee with all WPCA debts and taxes when these types of foreclosures occur.

Mayor Ganim asked if anyone else present wished to speak on the matter. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing on the disposition of the city owned property at 281-283 Dover Street at 7:47 p.m.

Council President McCarthy announced that Council Member Paoletto was absent due to a family emergency and Council Member Holloway was attending a funeral.

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEES:

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO COMBINE AND REFER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

31-15 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: TWENTY DAY NOTICE TO SETTLE PENDING LITIGATION PURSUANT TO MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 2.10.130 WITH WENDY TORRES, ACCEPTED AND MADE PART OF THE RECORD.

34-15 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT (OPM) TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) GRANT PROGRAM FOR DOWNTOWN NORTH GRANT, REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

35-15 COMMUNICATION FROM CITY ATTORNEY RE: PROPOSED WORKERS COMPENSATION PARTIAL STIPULATION WITH DANIEL DOMKOWSKI, REFERRED TO MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS COMMITTEE.

36-15 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BROWNFIELD GRANT PROGRAM - REMEDIATION FOR DIGESTER PROJECT - DECD (PROJECT #16231), REFERRED TO ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

37-15 COMMUNICATION FROM CENTRAL GRANTS RE: GRANT SUBMISSION: STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BROWNFIELD GRANT PROGRAM - CIVIC BLOCK ASSESSMENT - DECD (PROJECT #16247), REFERRED TO ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, ETC.:

33-15 RESOLUTION PRESENTED BY COUNCIL MEMBER(S) MCCARTHY, CASCO AND CASTILLO RE: REQUEST THAT THE HONORARY DESIGNATION OF "DEE CORTELLO PLACE" BE CREATED WITH PROPER SIGNAGE ON THE CORNER OF PARALLEL STREET ADJACENT TO SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH, REFERRED TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BRANTLEY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES**

TO ADD AN ITEM REGARDING REGARDING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2.04 OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES GENERALLY AMEND SECTION 2.04.010 JUSTICES OF THE PEACE. (ITEM #38-15) FOR REFERRAL.

**** COUNCIL MEMBER HERRON SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO REFER AN ITEM**

REGARDING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MUNICIPAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, CHAPTER 2.04 OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES GENERALLY AMEND SECTION 2.04.010 JUSTICES OF THE PEACE. (ITEM #38-15)

**** COUNCIL MEMBER LYONS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** COUNCIL MEMBER BANTA MOVED TO SUSPEND THE RULES**

TO ADD AGENDA ITEM #23-15 AFSCME, LOCAL 1522 - COUNCIL 4 CONTRACT BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

**** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mayor Ganim said that this was a matter that was inherited from the previous administration. He said that the contract was not forwarded to the Council. CGS 7-47 (b) lays out a procedure where the City Council can act to accept or reject the contract.

Mayor Ganim said that he was asking the various Council Members to reject the contract and to meet with the union representatives first thing tomorrow morning. The salary increases have not been budgeted and the contract was not sent to the Council. A large percentage of the deficit involved the Board of Education. If the contract is not rejected, then there will be lay-offs. He repeated the fact that there were no City funds set aside for these increases. If the Council rejects the contract tonight, he will have the opportunity to meet with ASFCME representatives to work on this.

Council Member Vizzo-Paniccia said that she would not be supporting the contract because the Council Members were not given time to review it. When the Council Members do their homework, they need to be thorough.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she wanted to know if the City would lose \$100,000 while the rest would be from the Board of Education. She wanted to know why the BOE wasn't present to answer questions. Despite this, Council Member Taylor-Moye said that she would not be rejecting this contract.

Council Member Olson said that he had voted to accept a contract when then majority of the Council voted against it. He said that there would be disagreements.

Council Member Brantley asked if there was any discussion with the union representatives. Mayor Ganim said that he had some discussion with them. He said that at the public hearing the union representatives had given their views.

Council President McCarthy said that he was aware that the administration had inherited the problems. But he also pointed out that AFSCME was the largest union and that the union also had the lowest pay scale. In terms of impact, a significant number of employees would be paid by Title 1 funding. There will be an impact on the BOE. On the City side, it would be about \$60,000. If there are issues on the Board side, it was time for the BOE administration to make some give backs. He added that these employees had the highest level of co-pays in the entire State for the health insurance.

Council Member Feliciano said that her concern was about the people that would not get raises. Mayor Ganim said that Mr. Flatto said that there were some ECS funding. Mayor Ganim said that if the Council was going to appropriate this funding, they would have to find a line to appropriate this funding. Discussion followed about the details.

Council Member McBride-Lee said that she did not want to see anyone laid off and that these union members were the lowest paid. She said that she had sympathy for these union members. If this contract had been handled properly, it would have been much easier. As a teacher with 30 years experience, she said that she knows many of the union members.

- ** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO APPROVE AGENDA ITEM #23-15 AFSCME, LOCAL 1522 - COUNCIL 4 CONTRACT.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER OLSON SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION FAILED TO PASS WITH FOUR (4) IN FAVOR (BANTA, TAYLOR-MOYE, OLSON AND MCCARTHY); NINE (9) AGAINST (BUKOVSKY, BURNS, VIZZO-PANICCIA, MCBRIDE-LEE, SALTER, CASTILLO, NIEVES, FELICIANO, AND MARTINEZ) AND FIVE (5) ABSTENTIONS (BRANTLEY, HERRON, LYONS, CASCO, AND SMITH).**

Mayor Ganim said that there was a service tomorrow morning for a student at 8:15 a.m. He said that following the conclusion of the service, he would clear his schedule in order to be available to the union representative. All the Council Members were invited to attend.

Council Member Taylor-Moye said that as President Pro Tem, if Council President McCarthy is not available, she should be provided with the information. Mayor Ganim said that he had this conversation with Ms. Hawkins.

Council Member Brantley said that she hoped that the Mayor would give the Council Members numbers to the department heads so they can notify the Council Members.

ADJOURNMENT

- ** COUNCIL PRESIDENT MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** COUNCIL MEMBER OLSON SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services.